

## **Interview with Reverend Phil Brockett, Pastor, Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ, February, 2016**

### **Where are you from?**

I'm originally from Northeastern Ohio where I grew up on a farm. Over the course of time I've lived in Nebraska, Colorado, Connecticut and now New Orleans.

### **What is your education or training?**

I received an undergraduate degree from West Virginia University and a Masters of Divinity from North Park theological seminary in Chicago Illinois.

### **Family?**

I have four children, Three are grown and launched and the fourth is my 6 year old daughter. My oldest son is an attorney here in New Orleans.

### **What you do when you're not working?**

As homeowner there are always things to do to keep up the house. I enjoy doing projects. I also enjoy technology. I'm also a sports fan and I'm very pleased that if the Saints couldn't win the Super Bowl that the Broncos did.

### **What is the mission of your organization?**

Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ is a progressive church. That means that while our faith is 2000 years old, our thinking is not. We believe that God is still speaking, this is why we are an inclusive church made up of people of different color, races and sexual orientation. Central St. Matthew is a combination of Central United Church of Christ which was located on Bienville Street in Madison African-American church with St. Matthew which was located here on Carrollton Avenue and was a German church. Our goal is bring New Orleans together by taking diversity and creating community.

### **How did you get this job?**

I've been in New Orleans for just a little bit over a year. In my previous experience I had led the revitalization of a church. I suspect that this is what caused Central St. Matthew to be interested in my resume. I've served churches in Lincoln Nebraska, Denver Colorado, New Britain Connecticut, and now New Orleans.

### **What drew you to this job?**

I'm a person who likes a challenge. And this is an incredibly challenging opportunity and I'm really enjoying

### **What's your approach to your job?**

I have several things that guide me in my work. First with God all things are possible! In addition I've learned that we all overestimate what we can accomplish in the short run but underestimate what we can accomplish in the long-term so persistence is essential. Finally I have two rules which I work by – 1. Only do what is fun! 2. Make everything you do for fun.

### **How have the people of Carrollton responded to your efforts?**

Folks have been wonderfully embracing and have welcomed me with open arms. I can't say that a lot has changed because I've only been here a short time but the one thing that we're doing is addressing our situation directly and working to find avenues for growth.

**What about the Carrollton community stands out?**

The diversity of our community is exciting and the development that is taking place in our neighborhood is amazing. There are renovations everywhere.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I like working with people. I find people fascinating and frustrating but to be able to share in the lives of people is a privilege and inspiration.

**What are some accomplishments since you have begun?**

I don't have any big accomplishments in the short duration of time that I've been here.

**How do you define success?**

My goal is for the church to grow by serving the community. I want to be part of the vibrant church has a strong sense of mission, that welcomes all people and makes a difference in our world.

**What are your goals or visions for the future?**

First of all I want people in the community to know that Central St Matthew exists and that we make a significant contribution to the life of our community. In addition I want our church to grow in size by ministering to the needs of all different kinds of people.

Peace

***Phil***

Rev. Philip K. Brockett  
Central St Matthew UCC  
1333 South Carrollton Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70118

email: philip.brockett@gmail.com

ph. 860.543.0605

web: <http://www.centralstmatthewucc.com/>